

Evaluation Report
PROCIPOTES /El Salvador
for the
Displaced Children and Orphans Fund

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Introduction

A. Project Context: Situation in El Salvador

Prior UNICEF analysis for El Salvador estimates the number of working children below the age of 18 to be approximately 270,000. These are children at risk, normally not in school and usually exploited and often abused. They are more likely to still live at home. Nevertheless, the current level of family disintegration, increased spousal and child abuse coupled with generalized violence experienced by the majority of Salvadoreans living in poverty can be expected to cause many high risk working children to break ties with their family and leave home, thus increasing the number of street children.¹

B. Project Description

USAID/Salvador, under the auspices of the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, began providing assistance to street children in El Salvador in September, 1994. A two year grant was awarded to Medical Service Corporation International (MSCI), No. 519-0420-00-G-4111-00, in the amount of \$500,000 on September 30, 1994. The project has been modified to extend both time and funding - \$1,005,500 until December 1996, with a \$152,173 counterpart contribution. (The project has since been extended to March/April 1997).

Prior to 1995, other than Olof Palme Foundation and one or two small church related efforts, no other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the country had experience working with the target population. Before 1995, not a single PROSAMI (the NGO health network) NGO had ever worked on a technical level with street children. PROCIPOTES staff has adapted monitoring and control methods from PROSAMI while at the same time actually developing and pioneering educational and psychological services for these children and youth which go far beyond the traditional "accompaniment" which is most often emphasized in programs for street children.²

¹ from MSCI's request for increased funding of May 25, 1995, p. 5

² from MSCI communication dated 9/17/97 p. 2

C. Project Goals, and Purpose

The goals of the project, based on the needs of the children, are structured to provide and increase access to

- literacy skills and education/recreation
- vocational skills and employment opportunities
- health care services and support
- psychological support and security through support groups and
- individual counseling awareness of children's rights through increased public education.

The PROCIPOTES Project was designed to form and support a network of NGOs working with both street children and displaced children. The project provides these children with literacy skills and education, vocational skills and employment opportunities, health care, and psychological support and counseling. Encouraging community participation is also one of the project's objectives. The project promotes an integrated community-based program approach for working with children at risk and children who are displaced, homeless and living on the streets.

II. Evaluation Design

A. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess progress to date and evaluate the extent to which PROCIPOTES is structured and managed to achieve its objectives. The report also includes recommendations for future activities. The evaluation took place from August 17 to 24, 1996.

B. Evaluation Team

The evaluation team consisted of two people. George Coleman, MPH, is a licensed family therapist and a member of the Technical Advisory Group to the Brazil At-Risk Youth Project. He serves as a technical consultant to the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) contract. Catherine Savino, MPH, director of the DCOF contract in Virginia, monitors and evaluates DCOF programs. Both team members have experience working with children and conducting evaluations.

C. Evaluation Methodology

The principal methodologies used for the evaluation included document review, interviews with individuals and groups and site visits. The team spent six days in El Salvador from August 17-24, 1996. A team planning meeting was held in Virginia on October 16, 1996 to prepare for the

visit. The team developed a questionnaire that was used to guide interviews with the NGOs. Analysis of this data plus the other sources cited are the basis for the report.

III. Findings and Conclusions

The project targets children at high risk and those living in crisis. Through a sophisticated array of professional services, PROCIPOTES has been successful in reaching this highly vulnerable group through their subgrantees. NGOs chosen to be in the network had already organized themselves as individual NGOs, but PROCIPOTES training allowed them to establish proficiency with this new population. However appropriate these strategies were in the project's initial phase, at this juncture, some changes are warranted. In view of the number of children who remain at risk and the cost, it is not feasible to continue with the rather personalized service approach now being utilized.

The project has succeeded in winning the cooperation and support of the Government of El Salvador and a number of international agencies. PROCIPOTES has fostered broad recognition of the problem within the public and private sectors. Although changes in the approach to working with the children are suggested in this report, the work of PROCIPOTES with the Government of El Salvador and with the community remains an integral part of the project's success and should continue.

IV. Observations

The team was impressed with the strong leadership of PROCIPOTES in managing and coordinating project initiation and service delivery. PROCIPOTES's effort to coordinate with other agencies has been a significant factor in putting children's issues on the national agenda. Thus, PROCIPOTES is highly respected among international agencies in El Salvador.

PROCIPOTES was effective in choosing subgrantees. PROCIPOTES brought them technical training to reach the target population and skills to strengthen their institutional capacity. Not all NGOs have become successful members of the network. One key observation has been that there is a strong relationship between the criteria for NGO personnel selection and project success. That has led to the need to improve selection criteria for the NGOs based on each one's internal policy concerning human resource development and social projection. In PROCIPOTES' experience, where there is no internal policy in these areas or where the policies do not favor or take into account the work performed, and the population which is served, there is extremely high turnover.³

³ from MSCI communication dated 9/17/97 p. 2

NGO training has also been an integral part of maintaining the network and honing the skills of staff. The Central American Peace Scholarships (CAPS) program and other training seems to

have been very instrumental in shaping key components of the program. Recent training, especially grouping staff by strategic objectives, is useful and should be continued.

The NGOs have done an impressive job of making themselves known in their communities in a relatively short amount of time. From articles in the press to surveys of local businesses and banks, they have been getting the message out and obtaining resources with varying success. Some have created public relations materials to use in their efforts to inform the public and educate donors.

From the beginning, PROCIPOTES has been applying certain programmatic guidelines to the subgrantees. Several of these listed below are applicable to similar DCOF programs elsewhere.

- The family should be incorporated into the program whenever possible. If supported by the project, the family can often become a major positive influence on the child.
- Children should be included in the groups that are working to design appropriate interventions and develop strong community relationships.
- In the target population, avoid incorporating troublemakers into the groups. Drugs users should not be mixed with nonusers.

IV. Recommendations

While much is commendable about the program's effectiveness and quality of services provided, there appear to be other interventions that are more appropriate now that the initial phase of the project has been completed. Beyond, the team's analysis, some of the recommendations come directly from PROCIPOTES' own reflection as to how their strategy could best improve. The audience for this report is not only PROCIPOTES but USAID/El Salvador and USAID/Washington from whom the original funding comes. While the focus of the evaluation is PROCIPOTES, the broader perspective of how this program fits in with DCOF goals and objectives runs through the report as well. In the spirit of making PROCIPOTES more accessible to the target population of children in need, the following are the team's recommendations.

- 1) Explore the use of another contracting mechanism for more cost-effective services.

PROCIPOTES is an expensive operation for the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund. In comparison with other programs, the cost of doing business is much higher than with others. The Displaced Children and Orphans Fund will need to evaluate the individual worth of this program balanced against the results that have been achieved to date.

2) Increase the number of beneficiaries served.

Most NGOs believe they are working at capacity and could not handle more than the approximately 60 children they monitor under the current system. Yet, most recognize the need to increase the number of beneficiaries. Some NGOs are working to expand the population by developing new strategies such as:

- Identifying groups within the community that are already providing some level of service and determine ways to supplement their services and add relevant components.
- Exploring additional community resources that could support more children.
- Redefining the roles and responsibilities of the team members. For example, as done by some of the NGOs, use volunteers for time-consuming activities such as taking groups of children to routine medical exams or recreational activities.
- Concentrating on fewer areas. For example, reduce the number of NGOs in the network and redistribute the funds to increase the target population elsewhere.
- Reexamining the number of beneficiaries. Ensure that all those receiving assistance, directly or indirectly, are being counted.

3) Focus less on individuals and more on group interventions

With no significant increase in staff anticipated, new approaches to education and therapy that rely more on group techniques and less on individual counseling should be introduced. The total emphasis on individual counseling sessions should be reduced. Strive for a balance between the two types of activities.

4) Discontinue the battery of tests that are administered to the children.

The main point is that individual psychological testing is expensive to administer, difficult for relatively untrained technicians to interpret and use and should be replaced by less costly analytic tools, including daily observation of behavior, emotional conduct, and group participation. The focus should be on observing and encouraging the progress of the child, primarily in group sessions.

5) Rewrite indicators to make them more specific and measurable.

The team notes the impressive job PROCIPOTES has done in establishing measurable objectives and disseminating this information to all participants. This is a difficult task and the project is to be commended for its work. Some refinement of the current indicators are suggested since these don't get at the project's full impact. For example, anecdotal information suggests that after working within the program, children have better self esteem, as measured by a better appearance and cleaner clothes. Though having cleaner clothes may seem like an insignificant marker, it may be more useful than a broader indicator that is not measurable.

- 6) In reports, emphasize progress made in specific quantifiable terms. This information should be conveyed to NGOs and become the basis for periodic meetings in which common problems are discussed.
- 7) Simplify forms as much as possible. Only data that are useful for program management or technical evaluation should be collected.

V. Lesson Learned

The overarching theme to the evaluation is that based on the work to date and as best stated by the PROCIPOTES project director, "in order to attend to a larger population, PROCIPOTES must modify the present strategy while not diluting the quality of services or jeopardizing the sustainability with human resource development which are cornerstone to longer term, financially viable responses. " ⁴

In the report that follows, chapter titles are taken from the scope of work and immediately below that is an expanded description of the heading (italized) also taken from the scope of work.

⁴ from MSCI communication dated 9/17/97 p. 2

II. OVERALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Assess the overall accomplishments of the program to date--the appropriateness of goals, purposes and interventions of PROCIPOTES and subgrantees. Determine if established goals are being met. Identify problems or delays that have affected project implementation. Identify lessons learned.

PROCIPOTES has been in operation in El Salvador since September 1994, through a grant to MSCI (Medical Service Corporation International) in response to an unsolicited proposal. The project name, PROCIPOTES, is a double message. The word means "for children" (especially neglected children) and is also an acronym (Pro-yecto de C-hicos I-ntegrados Po-r T-rabajo, E-ducacion y S-alud) that in English means a Project of Children Integrated through Work, Education, and Health.

The project has been headed by a very effective director in-country who has gained the confidence of the participating NGOs selected to provide services to children. As a result, the service effort now reaches target populations in six departments of El Salvador. The project director has developed effective liaison with other international agencies that fund efforts in El Salvador, including UNICEF, the Save the Children organizations of Sweden and the United States, and the Olof Palme Foundation of Swedish origin. The director has encouraged countrywide coordination through regular meetings with NGO staff and government and international agency representatives and through the exchange of project data and reports.

During its first two years of operation, the project was designed to meet five major strategic objectives (see chart 1-1) that are reflected in service components that provide or increase access to

- * literacy skills, education, and vocational training
- * recreational and cultural activities
- * physical and emotional health care services
- * improved quality of life through economic support for formal and nonformal education and credit, and
- * community resources and participation.

Chart 1-1
PROCIPOTES 1996 Major Goals and Objectives

Strategic Objectives	Activities
1. The literacy level of the target population will have increased between 40% and 60%	Evaluate target population of 60 children to determine study habits, cognitive development & vocational aptitudes Implement strategies which support 100% schooling (6-12 yr old target population) Establish individual literacy and vocational training Provide tutoring services to reduce desertion, increase achievement Meet individually and in a group with parents of target pop to encourage attendance in school/literacy/voc ed
2. Recreational and cultural activities play an essential role in the life of each member of the target population	Evaluate physical and motor development of target pop Establish individual recreational objectives Organize & carry out group activities Provide individual activities for special needs children Involve different sectors of the community Increase community participation in delivery of services
3. Improve the physical and emotional health of a minimum target population of 360 children	Medical evaluation of each member 2x per yr Individualized program with objectives Strategies for STD prevention and control Strategies for preventing early pregnancy Strategies to decrease use of inhalants Evaluate psycho-emotional profile 2x per yr Establish individual mental health program Provide individual therapy to high risk & crisis children Provide group therapy to children 6-18 yrs old Improve communication between parent and child Facilitate communication between parent and child through individual family therapy sessions
4. The quality of life for 360 members of the target population and their family members has improved as a result of access to formal and non formal education through implementation of economic support strategies	Establish a fund for scholarships that will support 100% formal and non formal education Develop strategies to access credit Provide access to credit lines Evaluate vocational aptitudes Promote work study for 13-18 yr old target pop Develop income generation project for the target group
5. The community actively participates in the analysis and search for solutions concerning children and youth at high risk and in crisis	Create a community inter-institutional committee that will support the CRC Develop strategies involving community participation in children's rights Establish collaboration between private business and local government representatives and the NGO

The project was designed to reach directly a total of 360 children and approximately 700 parents and siblings in the six departments of San Miguel, Usulután, San Vicente, La Libertad, Santa Ana, and Sonsonate. Although emphasis on the five strategic objectives may vary among the six departments, all five service components are represented in all NGOs that are receiving funding.

The PROCIPOTES staff has been rigorous in its attempts to develop competence in management and technical application of current knowledge to the problems presented by the target population. It has provided frequent technical assistance (usually weekly visits by the technical or financial monitors to each of the six departments) and training (on a monthly schedule) in psychological assessment, educational techniques, provision of psychotherapy, vocational training, and ideas for galvanizing the community into supportive activities. Training has also been conducted in project management, evaluation, data collection, and reporting. Each NGO receives a "grade" at the end of each month in various aspects of its delivery of services.

Through the Central American Peace Scholarships (CAPS) program, several dozen Salvadorean technicians working on this project and in government have been trained in the United States in community development techniques, organization of youth programs, drug rehabilitation, and help for victims of drug use and violence from family members. The evaluation team saw examples where program graduates had applied lessons learned to their programs once they returned home. The program was highly rated by participants, and PROCIPOTES's plan to bring graduates together periodically to build on their experience is worthwhile.

To develop uniform data collection and reporting procedures, PROCIPOTES has installed an elaborate (perhaps too complicated) system of indicators for measuring impact. The team believes that a meeting of all participating NGOs should be held to review the accuracy and usefulness of the present system.

One of the staff suggestions was that in some cases qualitative reporting might be more useful in describing the impact of the project than quantitative measures. For example, as an objective, the percentage change in literacy, is difficult and costly to measure. Likewise, complicated measurements of emotional state through time-consuming psychological tests is not a reliable indicator of mental health. When asked how they could tell they had an impact on a child, the staff responded that the child's appearance improved, the child was cleaner and the child was attending school. The NGO's staff also offered anecdotal observations of a child's behavior in groups for tutoring or recreation. Overall, there should be a logical flow from the strategic objectives to the indicators that measure impact.

The leadership of PROCIPOTES is to be commended for the progress it has made, starting early in 1995, to recruit organizations that were interested in activities in support of children at risk in El Salvador. PROCIPOTES offered financial and technical resources to these groups so they could expand their services to include all of the five service components and increase the number

of children and family members they reached. Through this effort, the first national network of organizations serving children has been created.

The major criticism of the project's work to date is that it has served a very limited number of children at a high cost per child. This cost might be justified as having been necessary to gain experience for the future services to be offered. Now that the base has been laid, it makes sense to develop services (based on the techniques developed thus far) that reach more children more economically. The many children in the target population who are not reached by any service should be the focus of the next phase.

III. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONTRACTUAL MECHANISM

Assess the effectiveness of this contractual mechanism as a vehicle to access and strengthen indigenous NGOs for this type of intervention

The contractual mechanism that supports these activities is a grant. A grant by definition should be used when the principal purpose of the award is to support or stimulate recipient activity and no substantial involvement by the government is anticipated. A grant is the most appropriate vehicle for accessing the skills of an NGO as well as minimizing the management burden for USAID.

This arrangement has also been useful as a mechanism to support indigenous NGOs, since the grant allows for the use of subgrantees. These NGOs have day-to-day contact with the children and thus offer the best hope for sustainability of the project's activities.

PROCIPOTES's NGOs were chosen on the basis of their institutional capacity. All were part of the existing PROSAMI network. They required neither organizational development nor strengthening to initiate activities. Thirteen proposals were received in response to PROCIPOTES's request for proposals and the four NGOs with the highest scores were chosen. An additional three NGOs were added to the PROCIPOTES network in January 1995. One NGO later dropped out, leaving six in the network currently.

PROCIPOTES has been able to provide coordinating services to the member NGOs. Training, technical assistance, and the purchase of commodities are areas where the individual NGOs have benefitted from this arrangement. In addition, PROCIPOTES played a role in garnering public and governmental support for activities in the country on behalf of children.

This particular grant is more expensive than other similar grants within the DCOF program. It is not clear how cost was factored when evaluating this unsolicited proposal. Given the overwhelming need in the country and MSCI's unique position, the proposal made sense. For the future though, based on the number of NGO's working in the country and the need to control costs, a competitive procurement should be considered.

IV. ADEQUACY OF THE STRATEGIES AND METHODOLOGIES

Evaluate the adequacy of the strategies and methodologies being used in each of the project's programmatic and geographic target areas.

The overall strategy of the project, which includes the careful diagnosis of the community to be served as a preliminary means of understanding the precise state of need within the target population, is a useful and necessary factor for future success. A careful inventory was made of community resources and, as a result, there were many contributions to the participating NGO or more directly to a child and his or her family in several departments. Development of this community strength has also led to more awareness and understanding of the plight of the children at risk within the community and in some cases to beneficial pairings of well-off families and needy children in mentoring relationships which have obvious benefits.

The community emphasis has also helped to develop locally the necessary political and policy support for these children and their basic human rights. Community resources have also been used to develop apprenticeship and other opportunities both for older children in need of training skills and for their parents, who have benefitted from the expanded income opportunities created by the loan credit program activated by the project.

The strategy of making efforts to involve the family of the child at risk in the process of educating and caring for the child will undoubtedly reap significant benefits yet to be realized. When the immediate family can be assisted to develop the skills needed to parent effectively and to provide emotional support for the child, a much more costly institutional alternative is avoided. Experience in other countries suggests that strengthening families will generally promote wellness for children and strengthen their ties to the community.

The emphasis on vocational training and strategy of ensuring that older children in apprenticeship programs to learn an income-producing trade continue their schooling is a pragmatic and realistic approach. The tutoring approach that uses volunteers as well as trained paid staff is a commendable way to attract children back to formal education.

The adequacy of the strategy and methodology that center on the intensive use of psychological testing for the child population is less clear. This is a very costly part of the project. Moreover, it relies on relatively newly trained field personnel to administer and interpret the tests.

The evaluation team is equally concerned about the excessive amount of time spent in individual therapy with the children in crisis. It is understood that individual therapy may sometimes be required for children in crisis or selected children at risk. However, equivalent results and improvements might be realized through less costly group activities monitored by a trained psychologist who now is more often occupied with the individual therapy. This approach would

have three advantages. It would permit more children to be served by a less intensive psychological service, it would lower costs per child, and it might be more replicable when adopted by agencies just beginning to contemplate such service configurations.

The project's strategy of including attention to the health needs of the children and their families is a wise one. Some of the departmental NGOs have made great strides in obtaining support from the private health infrastructure as well as the public one. Services take the form of routine examinations and care to the children, including preventive steps and health education. Some NGOs have discovered the usefulness of parental participation in this area, for example to shepherd groups of children to medical facilities for routine care, thus relieving most staff of this demand for their time and attention. Other NGOs should be encouraged to consider this approach.

V. APPROPRIATENESS AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

Evaluate the appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of specific interventions, especially those enacted in the last year for subgrantees.

Amendment No. 2 of September 8, 1995, modified the grant to add funds and amend the scope of work. The new funds allowed each NGO to increase staff and hours to include weekends and evenings. As a result, the number of children served in each NGO tripled from 20 to 60.

Though the team documented the increase in the number of target beneficiaries, it seemed to relate more directly to the increase in staff than to the extended hours. In fact, no additional hours of operation were observed. All NGOs thought they were working at capacity and could accept only a limited number of additional children.

Over time, the NGOs' focus has changed from identifying children at risk to working exclusively with the target beneficiaries. While the diagnostic surveys include strategies to identify as many children at risk as possible, those skills to identify children were no longer used once the 60 children were chosen. Instead, staff focussed exclusively on those 60 children. If it could be proven that they had improved dramatically, there might be some rationale for proceeding with this strategy. However, given the limitations of data collected, there is no way to correlate the general sense of improvement in these children with stated strategic objectives.

That is not to say that some of the strategic objectives have not been realized. The advances in community participation and parental involvement are pronounced. These are among the most difficult tasks of the five strategic objectives. There is a general tendency among these kinds of programs to rush into the child service area and neglect to build a larger base of support in sharing responsibility. Those programs fail. The PROCIPOTES NGOs relied on their experience and worked to build their community support base from the beginning.

The lessons learned from these NGOs apply elsewhere. Their hallmark is tenacity. Whether they are dealing with the police, the schools, local businesses, or the government, their approach is professional and persistent. They are clearly interested in long-term results.

VI. INNOVATIVE INTERVENTIONS

Identify and highlight specific innovative interventions which may be applicable to other situations, e.g., (1) How do the evaluation and data gathering systems work?

A credible attempt at evaluation is already being made through a series of reports that PROCIPOTES requires of the participating NGOs. It is not clear to the evaluation team how much of the data generated by the project reporting systems is actually used and understood by these participating agencies. Pages of countable items are collated by the central office on a quarterly basis. The information includes counts of children participating in the various service components offered through the project, how many psychological tests have been administered to how many children, how many hours of group therapy have been held, and so on. These data are not particularly useful in assessing the impact of the project.

What is needed instead is more information about the effect that all this attention, all these hours of individual and group therapy, all these recreation activities and sports events actually has on the target child. It requires moving into areas that are not so easily quantified. To understand the changes in a child, some simple qualitative observations are suggested:

- Is the child now clean and comfortably dressed?
- Does the child now refrain from inhaling shoe glue?
- Is he clear eyed and clear thinking?
- Is the child less disruptive in group activities or at home?

These are indications of positive changes in the child that would indicate progress and successful impact of the project on the child at risk.

This is not to say that none of the data being collected is useful. As one reaches the sections of reporting on education, for example, it may be ascertained that more children are enrolled in school now than at the beginning of the project and that a certain number of children have been successfully enrolled as apprentices. These numbers could be interpreted as indicators of increased literacy, since attempting to measure the actual percentage increase in literacy would be quite difficult.

It may be useful for the PROCIPOTES staff to hold a meeting of key technical and executive staff of the six departmental NGOs. This forum could review the data currently collected and redefine what is necessary. The group could determine what key indicators would lead to more useful

understanding of the project's impact, and ascertain what data could be removed from the system without comprising information that is needed.

- (2) *Do income generation activities result in improved conditions for street children, e.g., diet/medical treatment /education. Does vocational training enable older children to find jobs?*

There is no evidence to support the view that income-generation projects have demonstrably improved conditions for children. No data are collected that could correlate income-generation activities and any of the variables mentioned. In many cases, this is the last area of activity to receive attention from NGOs that have not had a full year of funding. Understandably, there are priorities that must be attended to before one can graduate to this level of service.

Each NGO has made attempts at identifying these opportunities for older children. One NGO surveyed 22 businesses to identify two positions that could be filled by older children. The groups have defined who is and is not eligible and what conditions must exist before the activity takes place. The strategic objective for this activity falls under SO #4, quality of life. In general, it could be assumed that if a child is regularly employed, by choice, and is attending school, with follow-up monitoring, this could serve as evidence of improvements in the areas mentioned above.

Regarding vocational training, here again it is too early in the life of the project to assess any real advances in this area. In visits to the departmental sites, the team found that in each organization it had been possible to prepare several older teenage youth to take on assignments as apprentices in potentially viable occupations, such as bakers, automotive mechanics, and electric technicians. Part of the success was attributable to the careful exploration, by PROCIPOTES and the local NGOs, of community resources and the cultivation of productive ties with merchants and entrepreneurs, many of whom were willing take on responsibility for supervising the work of the youth.

Interviews with shop owners, NGO staff, and the working young people themselves, yielded the view that this effort should be pursued more vigorously. The shop owners, with only one exception, were impressed with the eagerness of the children to learn, with their punctuality, and with their ability to grasp new skills. The children, all of whom were attending school half the day, indicated their contentment and excitement about learning new skills and earning an income. The parents seemed relieved to have their children well occupied, out of trouble, and in a position to contribute to the family income.

(3) *Does educational support to children attain basic literacy?*

After considerable discussion on the point, the team, along with USAID/El Salvador and the PROCIPOTES staff, seemed satisfied that registration at school can stand as a marker for increased literacy. However, it is still impossible to prove the strategic objective that calls for an increase in the literacy rate from 40% to 60%. No baseline data exist, nor are data collected that could measure the change. Suffice it to say that indicators should be improved so that an assessment can be made of the improvement that takes place in children's literacy.

This is also an area where NGOs have focused their time and attention. Groups are to be congratulated for getting children into school for the first time and for encouraging those who dropped out to return to school.

(4) *Evaluate the impact and cost-effectiveness of training.*

No data exist to accurately answer this question. The team had the strong impression, however, that training was one of PROCIPOTES strengths. The training schedule included two and three day long session involving a variety of topics. The staff were able to describe the training they received and show how they had implemented what they learned. The most recent training sessions have become more focussed, concentrating on the staff within each strategic objective. This should have a positive effect of the quality and comparability of data among NGOs. The sessions would also be useful in redefining indicators.

VII. SUSTAINABILITY

Address sustainability issues.

PROCIPOTES chose NGOs that appeared sustainable. Each one existed before receiving assistance from the program and most expected that their programs would continue to exist after PROCIPOTES ended.

Most NGOs had reasonable plans for sustaining their operations, either through the larger NGO with which they were affiliated or through plans to generate income from special services. Special services ranged from selling technical expertise in psychosocial testing to the Ministries of Education and Justice to developing plans to sell crafts made either by the children themselves or by others for resale.

The recent PROSAMI evaluation went to great lengths to analyze the variables that lead to sustainability. For a more in-depth analysis of possible factors involved in sustainability, see the PROSAMI report, pages 137-152.

This evaluation team's method was less precise. NGOs were asked whether they would continue this work once PROCIPOTES's funding ended and if so, how. The answers depended on whether the respondent expected the economy to improve sufficiently to be able to support the program. NGOs in tourist areas typically thought they had a better chance of supporting the program than NGOs in areas where business was generally depressed.

VIII. NEEDS OF THE BENEFICIARIES

Are the needs of the beneficiaries being met? Is there an impact on gender?

For the most part, the team believed that the needs of present beneficiaries were being met by the services provided through the PROCIPOTES project. Interviews with children and observations of children receiving tutoring and therapy, participating in group activities to develop social skills, sharing experiences, doing apprenticeships, and just enjoying recreational activities clearly indicated that many benefits were accruing that could lead to improved status for the children participating.

Interviews with parents of these children, who either were on the scene as volunteers helping in child activities or were receiving financial assistance through the project's loan credit component, also suggested direct benefits from the project. Some of the parents also referred to the parent orientation in groups by project staff as being particularly valuable in helping them develop new parenting skills and feel more a part of the community.

But, while the beneficiaries being served seemed to be served well, there remain thousands of children abandoned to the streets or living precarious lives as working children who need the kind of assistance the PROCIPOTES network is providing.

As discussed earlier, much good experience has been gained through the start-up period of this project. It is clear, however, that no donor would favor the cost-per-child ratios of the present project. It is therefore recommended that the staffing ratios and the service activities now provided be examined with a view to reducing staff costs, incorporating more group activities in place of individual attention, and reducing the amount of psychological testing employed. Ways of incorporating more community participation and more community resources as means of developing more affordable project components should also be explored. This effort should be a major priority for attention of the PROCIPOTES staff as it considers future expansion to unserved populations.

IX. GENDER ISSUES

Is there an impact on gender?

This question was asked of the field staff in each of the departments visited, with mixed results. Some respondents replied vaguely that they were sensitive to the issue and tried to ensure equal treatment of girls and boys and that girls were included in all opportunities for education and training, including vocational training and apprenticeship programs. But in fact, there were distinctions from the very moment the target children were selected for inclusion in the project. In some NGOs, boys outnumbered girls more than two to one. This may have occurred because of bias on the part of the interviewers doing the selection, may have been an expression of the fact that boys outnumber girls in the street or may have been because the girls were expected to stay at home and keep house and take care of the younger children while their mothers worked. Cultural influences, such as the concept that "macho" is the one to be trained for work and the "femenina" is the one to be prepared for marriage, may also affect these decisions. Once a girl is enrolled in the project, attending formal or nonformal education sessions or receiving therapy for abuse, some of the NGO staff noted that she might be a frequent absentee, held back at home to take care of the children.

ANNEX

Names of PROCIPOTES NGOs by Department

Department	NGO	Year Entered Project
La Libertad	OPRODE- Organizacion Profesional de Desarrollo	1996
San Miguel	FUMA- Fundacion Maquilishuatl	1996
Santa Ana	ASAPROSAR- Asociacion Salvadorena Pro Salud Rural	1995
San Vicente	OEF- Organization Empresarial Femenina	1995
Sonsonate	AGAPE (Greek for love)	1996
Usulután	FUNDEMUN- Fundacion de la Mujer y Nino	1995

PROCIPOTES Evaluation

August 1996

I. INTRODUCTION

USAID/Salvador and USAID/W (which has responsibility for the oversight of activities under the global Displaced Children and Orphans Fund) began providing assistance to street children in El Salvador on September 30, 1994. A two year contract was awarded to Medical Service Corporation International (MSCI), No. 519-0420-00-G-4111-00, in the amount of \$500,000 on September 30, 1994. The project has been modified to extend both time and funding - \$1,005,500 until 12/96, with a \$152,173 counterpart contribution.

The goals of the project, based on the needs of the children, are structured to provide and/or increase access to

- literacy skills and education/recreation
- vocational skills and employment opportunities
- health care services and support
- psychological support and security through support groups
and
- individual counseling awareness of children's rights through increased public education.

USAID has determined that a mid-term evaluation of street children activities implemented through MSCI should be conducted. A two person team will visit project sites, interview key personnel and review documentation to evaluate progress, ascertain lessons learned and make recommendations. The team will be in-country August 17- 24, 1996 and will submit a preliminary draft report prior to departure.

The mission, in consultation with MSCI will prepare a tentative schedule for the team's visit prior to their arrival. On arrival, the team will review their responsibilities and initial schedule with the mission and discuss any additions or revisions that may be necessary.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess progress to date and to evaluate the extent to which PROCIPOTES is structured and managed to achieve its objectives. The evaluation will identify constraints to achieving project objectives and make recommendations for project improvement.

The purpose of the project is to assist the Grantee to form and support a network of PVOs working with street and displaced children. The project will provide displaced and street children with improved literacy skills and access to education, vocational skills and employment opportunities, economic opportunities through credit and child-run micro-enterprises, health and nutritional status and emotional security through counseling and reinsertion into a family environment.

III. BACKGROUND

The situation of children and youth in Salvador is precarious. Prior UNICEF analysis estimates the number of working children below the age of 18 to be approximately 270,000. These are children at risk, normally not in school, usually exploited, and often abused.

The project promotes an integrated community-based program approach for working with at risk children and children who are displaced, homeless and presently living in the streets. The children are located in both the urban and rural areas of El Salvador.

IV: STATEMENT OF WORK

- 1) Prepare a concise overview of the impact of PROCIPOTES on children and families in the areas where the project is being implemented. Information gathering should include contacts with key ministries/departments, international organizations and NGOs.
- 2) Review the goals and objectives and approaches of PROCIPOTES as well as its specific activities in relation to the identified problems of children and the experience of similar programs in other countries with a view toward identifying any ways it could increase its impact or effectiveness.
- 3) Identify any lessons learned by PROCIPOTES that may have applicability to programs for children and families outside of El Salvador.

- SPECIFIC TASKS

- 1) Assess the overall accomplishments of the program to date--- the appropriateness of goals, purposes and interventions of PROCIPOTES and subgrantees
 - Determine if established goals are being met
 - Identify problems or delays that have affected project implementation
 - Identify lessons learned
- 2) Assess the effectiveness of this contractual mechanism as a vehicle to access and strengthen indigenous NGOs for this type of intervention.
- 3) Evaluate the adequacy of the strategies and methodologies being used in each of the project's programmatic and geographic target areas.
- 4) Evaluate the appropriateness and cost effectiveness of specific interventions, especially those enacted in the last year for subgrantees.
- 5) Identify and highlight specific innovative interventions which may be applicable to other situations e.g.
 - how do the evaluation and data gathering systems work?

- do income generation activities result in improved conditions for street children? e.g. diet/medical treatment /education
- does educational support to children attain basic literacy?
- evaluate the impact and cost effectiveness of training
- does vocational training enable older children to find jobs?

6) Address sustainability issues.

7) Are the needs of the beneficiaries being met? Is there an impact on gender?

V: REPORTING

In addition to the summary to be presented during the team's debriefings with the USAID Mission and PROCIPOTES in El Salvador, the team is to prepare a full written report addressing activities 1-4 above. It is to be submitted to USAID/El Salvador within 14 working days of the team's return to the United States. The Mission will review and comment within 14 working days and the report will be submitted in final. Sufficient copies will be provided to all interested parties.

Itinerary

PROCIPOTES Evaluation

August 17, 1996	11:00 am	airport pick-up
August 19, 1996	8:30-9:30 am	Meeting with Kellis, BDoe, PKranstover, CEwards
	9:30-11:30 am	Meeting with SO 3 and SO 1
	11:30-1:00 pm	Lunch
	2:00-4:30 pm	Meeting at PROSAMI with institutions involved with PROCIPOTES (Procuraduria, Radda Barne, Save the Children)
August 20, 1996	8:00 am	Field trip to La Libertad with OPRODE Field trip to San Vicente with OEF Meeting with UNICEF
August 21, 1996	6:30 am	Field trip to Usulután with FUNDEMUN Field trip to San Miguel with FUMA
August 22, 1996	8:00 am	Field trip to Santa Ana with ASAPROSAR Field trip to Sonsonate with AGAPE
August 23, 1996	12:00 noon	Lunch with World Rehabilitation Fund
	1:00-2:00 pm	Debrief USAID
	2:30-3:30 pm	Debrief Field Staff
	3:30-4:30 pm	Debrief Executive Directors
August 24, 1996	6:00 am	Leave to airport